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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
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INFO RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 0271
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 001358

SIPDIS

WHA/CEN FOR ALBERT KRAAIMORE
USEU FOR BOB BLACKSTONE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/24/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE RESPONSE: SPAIN HONORING EXISTING AID
COMMITMENTS TO NICARAGUA

REF: A. STATE 132044
[1](#)B. MADRID 1225

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Arnold A. Chacon, for reasons 1.
4(B) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff discussed Nicaraguan municipal elections and conveyed points (ref A) to Spanish MFA Sub-Director General for Mexican, Caribbean, and Central American Affairs Jorge Romeu Gonzalez-Barros on December 23. Though Spain had been considering reducing its support to the Nicaraguan police, Romeu said the GOS had decided to maintain said contributions because the police project was well run and not overly politicized. Spain had likewise decided to maintain its support for the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health. Romeu said he understood the Czech Republic was circulating a proposal to catalog individual donors' bilateral support programs, to be considered at a January 8 meeting in Brussels.

[1](#)2. (C) Romeu reiterated the European Commission's December decision to cease direct budgetary support to the GON. He shared the text of a December 10 letter from European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner to Nicaraguan FM Samuel Santos communicating the suspension of disbursements and linking the measure directly to lingering concerns about the conduct of November 9 municipal elections. Ferrero-Waldner noted to Santos in writing the European position that budgetary support to "the policies of (the Nicaraguan) government" were "not the right form of assistance" for Nicaragua. Payments already obligated in 2008 to support Nicaragua's National Development Plan and food security assistance would be honored, Romeu said. Such disbursements would nonetheless be discontinued as of January 1, 2009 barring what the letter termed "a positive evolution in the situation in Nicaragua."

[1](#)3. (C) Regarding Nicaragua's future, Romeu confessed it was difficult to imagine such an evolution. During FM Santos's November visit -- the real motive of which was to see a Real Madrid soccer match, according to Romeu -- Santos had registered a complaint at the Presidency of the Spanish Government over Spain's silent treatment of Nicaraguan President Ortega, the only Latin American president not to have been invited to Madrid. Romeu insisted there would certainly be no major visits now, and assured Poloff that Nicaraguan Ambassador to Spain Zamora was well aware.

[1](#)4. (C) Romeu allowed that he himself would consider an official trip to Nicaragua in the February 2009 timeframe, depending on the wishes of Spanish Secretary of State for IberoAmerican Affairs Trinidad Jimenez. He said he would have gone to Managua earlier, prior to the fraudulent elections, in part to moderate the EU position toward Nicaragua. At this point, he explained, there was no longer much daylight between the Spanish and broader European

positions. The Spanish Ambassador to Managua has, however, asked that Romeu travel to Nicaragua to tell the GON "the truths."

15. (C) Finally, Romeu mentioned the EU might yet consider moving its Central American headquarters, currently in Managua, to some other capital. While the GOS would not oppose such a move, he believed the idea had lost momentum.

AGUIRRE